[11 cont.]
*756 might dedicate herself to her teaching. The woman shaman called for the purpose recognized at once that our informant had the spirit appropriate to her calling and began the tutelage of the new curer [curandera].

Another woman shaman narrated the first symptoms of her
[881] vocation in this way. When she had reached the age of reason, that is, about ten or eleven years of age (the time of the initiation for the change from girl to young woman: the beginning of puberty), she felt one day a need to perform a bodily function. She went into the woods to do this, but no matter how much she tried she was unable to do it. This situation repeated itself sev-
[787] eral times. At night she dreamed that a spirit descended and, taking her by the hand, led her to a stream where there was a big field of plantain and ahuyama. At sunrise the next day [12] she woke up depressed and trembling. She heard a voice in her ear
[226] saying, "Eat manilla and macuira (3)." She frequently lost

3. A plant with a leaf similar to that of tobacco.

consciousness and when she came to again was weak and trembling. When she ate what was ordered, the shivering and feeling of illness disappeared as if by enchantment, and she remained in perfect health. She was going to be a shaman. Her mother, who was already one, announced this fact and prepared to begin her training according to the rules.

*756 From the personal statements of these two shamans which
787 we have just reported and from other relative data that we have
171 been able to obtain by word of mouth from other informants, we can deduce the following: 1) The graduations to the rank of shaman (the illumination, we might better call it) are revelations of the wanurú ("spirit of death") which enters the body of certain persons chosen by it, that they may exercise the office of curer magicians. As a proof of the presence of the spirit in new shamans through manifestations of revelation, we may see among the Bororó tribe of Brazil, for example, how the spirit appears in the shape of a monkey or water hog (4), and among the

4. Métraux, Alfred. Le Chamanisme chez les indiens de l'Amérique du Sud Tropicale

*756 787 171

[12 cont.]

[Shamanism Among the Indians of Tropical South America], I, p. 203.

Apinagé [Apinaye] shamans are designated "by the soul of some close relative who puts them in communication with the world of the spirits, from whom they obtain their medical science." (5)

5. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 203.

Hubert and Mauss, referring to this same matter, state the following: "Magic virtue is acquired by revelation in the majority of Australian tribes. Normally, this revelation is produced in the course of a dream or in an ecstatic or semiecstatic state. This revelation is generally the work of spirits, spirits of the dead, pure spirits, and probably very frequently the work of spirits less clearly classified, whose qualities are not defined and whose mythical figure floats between the shades of mankind, the animal, and the divinity of nature (6)." And with respect to revelation

6. Origen de los poderes mágicos en las sociedades australianas [Origin of Magic Powers in Australian Societies] by Hubert and Mauss, III, 235.

they tell us again: "It is possible and even probable that the theme of the revelation by the spirits of the dead is at least confounded in one and the same complex myth with the theme of the revelation by pure spirits." (7)

7. Ibid. [13]

*756 787 786

2) This spirit reveals its presence by means of a sudden illness, as we have just seen in previously mentioned incidents, or by other variable symptoms, but they are usually actual hysterical attacks, in which the spirit manifests itself by strong convulsions and by loss of consciousness to signify it has entered into possession of the person destined to become a shaman.

[13 cont.]

*756 764 With respect to the hysterical attacks so characteristic of shamans, there exists considerable confirmation of this in a fact which is connected with the death of these curers. Custom demands that when one of them dies, it is essential that their wake be kept for three consecutive days and nights, because as these attacks occur frequently and at times last for a considerable time, there is a fear that the shaman may not be really dead and that consequently he may be buried alive if the mourners do not wait for a reasonable time to see if he recovers.

*756 276 3) A magic plant, tobacco, is involved in the making of a new shaman in two ways: (a) The aspiring shaman must chew it for several consecutive days in order to enter into a state of ecstasy and so provoke the absorption of the spirit by his person. One must remember that at the moment the initiate has an attack, a piece of tobacco or manilla is put into his mouth. When [827] he recovers consciousness, he belches loudly because of the action of the tobacco, and these belches are considered to be canticles of praise and gratitude to the spirit which desires to reside in him. The establishment of relations between the spirit and the medicine-man aspirant by means of a magic plant, such as the tobacco we [171] have referred to, is found also among the Conibo: "The apprentice shaman of the Conibo of the Ucayali receives his medical science from a spirit. To enter into communication with the latter, the shaman drinks a decoction of tobacco and smokes as much as he can in a hermetically sealed hut." (8) [Cited in French.]

8. Métraux. Op. cit., 204.

*756 787 (b) The diviner must see in the different changes in the embers of the tobacco whether the individual whose future he foretells after an attack of illumination will become a true shaman or not. His verdict is final.

4) Dreams, or at least hallucinations, are decisive factors in the determination of the quality of shaman.

*756 5) The vocation of shaman cannot be renounced. Better said, it does not depend upon the individual himself; once the symptoms have appeared and the diviner has given a favorable

*756 [13 cont.]
verdict, the decision must be accepted; otherwise he will die for having disobeyed the orders of the spirit. [14]

*756 114 171 Métraux, referring to the abnormal physical and psychic characteristics of the medicine man says: "Im Thurn" (Among the Indians of Guiana. London, 1883, p. 334) "declares that among the Indians of British Guiana shamans are recruited from among epileptics, but this affirmation, which no other authority confirms, could well have been inspired by the behavior of the piai in the course of his trances." (9) [Cited in French.]

9. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 201.

On our part, we can say that we also were tempted to classify as epileptic the attacks which the shaman suffers at the beginning of what we have called his vocation, since the symptoms described make one easily believe that they are such. But when we learned of the curious and interesting aspect of sexual taboo, possibly more severe for the woman than the man, which we shall describe fully in future chapters, we were then inclined to think of them as a form of hysteria, and for this reason we have called them hysterical attacks.

It might be thought that the effect of the tobacco or some other narcotic is what brings about this state of trance or ecstasy, but one must bear in mind that one of the clear signs of the illumination is the attack which occurs before taking the narcotic or stupefying drug. This makes us disagree with Professor Métraux when he states: "No anomaly or physical or physiological particularity seems to have been chosen as the symptom of a special predisposition for the practice of shamanism." (10) [Cited in French.]

10. Ibid., I, 202.

Furthermore, the visions and loss of consciousness are confirmed by Kurt Nimuendajú, cited by Professor Métraux when referring to the Bororó:"... a spirit appears before him in the form of a monkey or water hog and demands of him his submission. His head whirls, a thousand colors dance before his eyes: he has

*756 [14 cont.]
114 become a bari." (11) [Cited in French.]
171

11. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 203.

We find another proof of the sick personality of the shaman, which would appear to be an almost indispensable requisite of the profession, among the Yaruro of the plains of Venezuela. "Every community has its own priest or musician. This is a shaman or piache. He is a more or less retarded being from the psycho-physiological point of view and one whose soul — he says — journeys to the land of the gods during religious ceremonies." (12) [15]

12. Le Besnerais, Henry. Algunos aspectos del río Capanaporo y de sus indios Yaruros [Some aspects of the Capanaporo River and of its Yaruro Indians], p. 18.

*756 Period of training. Continuing with the story of the woman shaman with which we began this chapter about magic in La Guajira, we shall now see how the older shaman called in for the purpose carried out the training of the aspirant. She transmitted all her knowledge in a long period of training. She took hold of the apprentice, sat her on her knees, made her take up the ceremonial maraca, and with her own hand showed and directed her in all the required movements. She proceeded to invoke the spirits and to make her pupil repeat all the motions, positions, prayers, and canticles. This operation was carried out several times during the day and at times during the night. Furthermore, the old shaman was always on the alert for the various orders and indications which the spirit imparted to the pupil. After some time had elapsed in this training, the spirit said to the instructress: "Withdraw. Now the young woman can be a shaman." Afterward it gave instructions regarding the fiesta of culmination about which we shall learn in the corresponding section.

During the period of training the teacher shaman demanded from the initiate some proofs of her knowledge [ciencia]. On one occasion she said, "Take a firebrand and make an attempt at divination." The girl obeyed and proceeded to divine as she had

[18 cont.]
*756 to bring on lactation, to gain weight, etc., are partly public
755 knowledge and partly privately known by a few families who tra-
[208 ditionally preserve the secret of their use for their personal benefit.
847] By what has been previously stated we see how the ceremony of healing is a perpetual invocation of the spirit, a continual fear that it might withdraw its aid for whatever motive, and a perennial anxiety to satisfy its slightest wish in order to obtain the success sought. To give evidence for this we shall see how the Guajiro shaman effects a cure when he has been called in to handle one.

[431] First of all, before he initiates such activities, he demands a gift. For this reason whenever a native needs the services of the shaman for magico-medical attention for some relative, he goes to present himself to the shaman with a gold necklace or some other valuable present.

●171 Each time the shaman goes to cure a sick person he takes
*756 with him two maracas. This custom is rather widespread in
755 South America, where the magic power of the maraca appears to be extraordinary and is commonly accepted, although with some variations from tribe to tribe whether in the [19] quality of its different parts, in the artifacts adornment, in the manner of using it, etc. To corroborate this it is sufficient to quote Professor Métraux again, who says, in reference to the apprentice shaman: "During his initiation the novice learns to make use of the accessories indispensable to the magic art. The most important of all, that which in some manner symbolizes the profession is the maraca or rattle made from a calabash containing some seeds or pebbles and provided with a handle." (15) [Cited in French.]

15. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 217.

[352] The medicine man accommodates himself in a seat especially reserved for such occasions and carved in wood in the form of an animal, but if such an artifact is lacking, he will use any convenient seat. The custom of using a seat of this type is also found in the Guianas. "The wooden seat is an equally indispensable accessory for the shaman of the Guianas. It is often carved in the form of a jaguar, an animal that plays an important part in the

171 +756 755

[19 cont.]
invocations of the spirits and in the metamorphosis of the shaman." (16) [Cited in French.] The shaman moves his torso in gyra-

16. Ibid., I, 218.

tion. When he is in trance and effecting a cure which requires the invocation of the spirit, no noise must be made as this will cause the spirit to become frightened and to flee; and being left without his protector spirit, the shaman will suffer violent fits and fall to the ground in severe convulsions. The shaman always carries a piece of manilla in these cases; he chews it and becomes intoxicated with the juice, which induces him to sing with greater verve. The juice of the manilla also serves to spray the body of the patient as well as the walls and all around the house to frighten away the malignant spirit. This custom of the magic use of tobacco is also very common in America; not to overexpand the subject we limit ourselves to giving a simple example cited by Pauly with reference to the Araona Indians of Bolivia: "They use tobacco dust mixed with coca to cure their sick and ward off the evil spirits, chewing it and spitting the juice on the body of the sick person. They also spit it at the heavens to calm the storms and at the river when it is in flood." (17)

17. Pauly, Antonio. Ensayo de Etnografía Americana. Viajes y Exploraciones [Essay on American Ethnology. Voyages and Explorations], VI, 128.

755 The treatment really begins with a chant of invocation to the spirits. While the ceremony is performed the shaman continually chews tobacco and he rubs the juice formed by the saliva and the juice of the plant over the body of the patient; and immediately after this, he energetically sucks several consecutive times at the affected parts of the body of the sick man to draw out [20] the malignancy. (The sickness that the native has, no matter what may be its special characteristics or from whence it may have arisen, is derived from the malevolent action of the

[25 cont.]

universal god of the Guajiro Indians is none other than the protector divinity of rainfall and the propitiator of the harvests.

is invoked by a singular chant known by the name of fumayule, and wanurú, the spirit of sickness and of death by that of jirairay. The latter is the spirit that demands [26] offerings, the one that interposes himself in cases of sickness, impeding their cure, for it never wants to lose its hold on the sick person's soul it has imprisoned, so causing the illness. It is also the one which discusses with the shaman's protector spirits and the shaman himself the handing back of the patient's soul so that he can recover his lost health. We deem it necessary to make it clear that all the spirits of the dead are named wanurú; for this reason their number is immense. The only difference that we have been able to establish between the wanurú and the shaman's protector spirits lies, in our opinion, in the fact that the latter are the spirits of shamans who have died but who wish to keep on carrying out their functions through others after death. Our statement is confirmed by Professor Métraux, who, quoting Tessman, affirms: "The Campa and Amahuaca medicine men claim to receive their knowledge from some shaman, living or dead. Either the soul makes the advances and visits its pupil in a dream, or the novice, intoxicated with ayahuasca, sends his other self among the spirits to receive teaching." (19) [Cited in French.]

19. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 203.

And further along he states: "The auxiliary spirits can be of different kinds. Among the Taulipáng and the Roucouyenne [Rucuyen]" — according to Koch Grünberg — "they are the souls of former shamans, or spirits of plants or animals." And later: "The distinction between the two types of Bororo shamans is mainly based on the different origin of the spirits from which they derive their power. The shamans called bari are possessed by bope, ... which are either spirits of nature or souls of dead

[26 cont.]
colleagues. On the other hand, the aroettawaraare are mediums chosen by the souls of ancestors and their main function is to serve as intermediaries between the world of the living and that of the dead," according to Colbacchini. (20) [Cited in French.]

20. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 211.

Hubert and Mauss, speaking of magic revelations by the dead among Australian tribes, state as follows: "The simplest manner in which the authors describe this revelation consists in stating that the parents' spirits are those that give magic power to their children. The precision is even greater when the author expressly states, as does Howitt, with respect to the Kulin on the Wimmera River that only young men who have seen their mother's spirit seated on her grave are capable of becoming wizards." (21) And specifically in one of the stories narrated

21. Hubert and Mauss. Op. cit.

to our colleague Chaves in La Guajira with relation to the shaman Umaralá, [27] we find the following statement: "Every afternoon Umaralá set out to walk to the cemetery to visit the grave of his aunt and to light fires to her memory – she having been a very wise shaman – but on one occasion he had a clear vision of his aunt for whom he was grieving, and she said to him: "Go, my son, to the region of Jarara, take my cloak and my maraca, visit the sick and "shamanize" them, and only thus will you find the true path." (22)

22. Chaves, Micfades. Mitos, leyendas, etc. [Myths, Legends, etc.], p. 322.

With respect to the number of each shaman's protector spirits, we can state that Josefina, one of our personal informants, had eight, three male and the rest female. The names by which these spirits were known were the following: benawa,

[30 cont.]

*756 262 for his services as a curer; the flesh of animals sacrificed during anyone's wake or during the ceremony of the second burial, especially if it is the remains of a shaman which are to be exhumed; ordinary food during the days on which he is carrying out his profession when he should limit himself to a small portion of corn mazamorro [cooked crushed corn] and water. Hence, the cattle [423] he receives at his spirit's request in exchange for his cures are used in an indirect manner, being kept for breeding purposes.

● 171 260 *756 We also find that the food taboo among shamans is characteristic among the Cashinawa Indians, according to the text published by Capistrano de Abreu and cited by Métraux. According to them the souls (spirits) say to the initiate: "I have innoculated you with the magic substance. Do not, therefore, eat carelessly any sort of nourishment or you will lose your magic power (feitico). Eat sparingly. Drink soup, eat cooked bananas and fish. Eat nothing but that!"

They say: "When you do not eat [sic]. Do not eat the tapir, do not eat the deer, do not eat the peccary, do not eat jaguar, do not eat nambú, do not eat the jaeau, do not eat the cujubin, do not eat the coati, do not eat the guariba, do not eat the monkey. These are the foods that you may not eat. If you do eat them [31] we will kill you, say the spirits. Among vegetables do not eat sweet potatoes, sweet manioc, or the innames." (25) [Cited in French.]

25. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 204.

*756 422 [428] So far as the other objects that the shaman receives as payment for his work, neither may he use these directly. He simply keeps them, or he gives them to his children [hijos] as he does with the cattle. These objects, if they are not handed over while he is alive, will be divided up after his death among his heirs in accordance with Guajiro customary law....

*756 765 Death of a shaman. When a shaman becomes ill he has to call in a colleague to practice on him all the ceremonies and rites indispensable for fending off the illness, since curers have the power to cure others but are not able to cure themselves.

[32 cont.]

various spirits by one person. They are several spirits associated by this post-mortem relationship which act inseparably in their function as counselors.

It is also very probable that the protector spirits invoked by the shamans may not be anything other than the spirits of famous deceased shamans of times past to whom they turn for aid. In this case they would only have to make a change of name due to the taboo relating to the use of the name of dead persons, which we shall explain in the corresponding chapter.

• • •

Before continuing with our subject, we wish to make certain clarifying statements with respect to the presence of women in the science of magic in La Guajira and in general among primitive Americans. We have already seen that among the Guajiro Indians the only basic condition required to become a shaman is what we have called the "revelation," accompanied by the symptoms described earlier. The sex, age, or economic and social position of the person is not taken into account in any way. It is, as we have stated, only necessary to be of a hysterical nature. However, Métraux in his work which we have repeatedly quoted states:

"In tropical South America the profession of shaman appears to be as a general rule reserved for the masculine sex. One does find, however, among many writers reference to women shamans." (26) [Cited in French.] According to these authors

26. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 198.

quoted by Métraux, (Rochefort, Roth, Koch, Grünberg, and Ives d'Evreux), women shamans are to be found in the Antilles and among the Tupinamba, Taulipang, Arekuna [Arekena], and Macushi [Macusi].

With reference especially to women shamans in La Guajira, Métraux maintains the following, based on Petrullo's The Yaruros of the Capanaparo River: "Among the Arawak tribe of the Guajiro

[32 cont.]
114 the number of women shamans is greater than that of the men
P11 piai. At the suggestion of these latter, women will enter the
S62 profession following a call from the spirit world and [33] are
#756 initiated into the secrets of their art by an experienced shaman who at night teaches them to handle the rattle and sing their magic songs." (27) [Cited in French.] He likewise quotes cases

27. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 199.

of women shamans among the ancient Mojo Indians of eastern Bolivia and the Itonama, neighbors of those previously mentioned (28), as well as among the Apapocuva (Guaraní), the

28. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 199.

Cobeuo, the Palikur, and the Carajá (29).

29. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 200.

Further on, speaking of the role of women in witchcraft, he says: "With the exception of the passage in Ives d'Evreux..." (relative to the Tupinamba) "there does not exist any description of a shamanistic seance of the current type being directed by a female piai. This hiatus is perhaps due to the poverty of our sources, but it is also revelatory of the real position of women in shamanism. The profession is open to them, but the role they play in it is modest. It appears they limit themselves to simple and easy cures, to various remedies, and to the recital of charms. Women do not usually take part in the invocation of spectacular spirits before the extraction of pathogenic substances. It is certainly not through the effect of simple coincidence that women shamans appear especially in the cultures that have come strongly under European influence (Guajiro, Yaruro, Palikur, Warrau, Itonama, and Guaraní, etc." (30) [Cited in French.]

30. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 200.

[35 cont.]

*756 their protection to him. When he is performing the ceremonial
775 indispensable for freeing the body and soul of a patient from the clutches of the wanurú, he represents nothing but the role of intermediary between two worlds and especially between two classes of spirits – that of his protector who wishes to save the sick person and that of others now dead who desire above all
[753] that the evil they have caused the person of the sick man should continue until it ends with his death, so that in this way they can avenge an offense received, or simply satisfy some capricious wish of their own, as beings capable – because of their position as inhabitants of another world, a position superior to everything we can imagine in this mortal universe – of doing any harm they wish.

755 This position of intermediary is clearly shown in the cere-
*756 mony of curing. The communication must be made through definite material objects which take on in their turn the character of untouchables: the maraca, the crown, the tassels which contain a representation of goat dung, and the tobacco or manilla, objects which cannot be used by others but only by shamans during their moments of trance or invocation; the solitude to which the curer submits himself during his invocations, with only his patient present, for fear that the protector spirit might disappear and refuse to give aid in the cure which the shaman is trying to effect; his protector spirit's demands for certain objects to satisfy the voracity of harmful spirits or its own, demands which must be complied with to the letter; the ritual chants which relate the different moments of agreement between the harmful spirits and that of the shaman; the sacrifice of an animal determined by the spirit – male goat, sheep, etc. – as recompense for the spirit's favors; and lastly, the expressed prohibition that rests on the shaman not to eat or use the [36] animals or objects that he receives in payment for his cures. All these are facts which clearly indicate that the shaman is no more than an intermediary or an earthly representative of the spirits of good, or even of evil, and above all of the dead shamans who wish to continue exerting their beneficial influence on the group to which they belonged in life.

171 This function of communication with the spirits, annexed
*756 to, and inseparable from, the personality of the medicine man,
787

[36 cont.]

171 #756 787 is universal. It is, so to speak, the ultimate end of his mission in the community. Professor Pinto reaffirms it when, speaking of the Tupinambá pagé, he writes as follows. "Another of the functions or callings of the pagé was to communicate with the spirits or with the devil.... Frequently, as Nóbrega gives us to understand, by means of the maraca ...." And further on: "Naturally, the power to communicate with the spirits raised the pagé to the category of xamá. The xamá in Herbert Kõnig's exact definition is characterized by his faculty of speaking with the spirits, especially, in his moments of trance or ecstasy. Or, as Robert H. Lowie explains, the xamá is a kind of "medium" who possesses the gift of relating himself with the supernatural and serving as its interpreter." (31) [Cited in French.]

[113]

31. Pinto Recife, Esteban. La extraña figura del Pagé Tupinambá [The Strange Figure of the Tupinambá Pagé], pp. 323-324.

171 #756 Our contention regarding the involuntary nature of the profession of shaman, and by the same token its irrenouncibility, is sustained by this report which Métraux has taken from Nimuendajú with reference to the Bororó: "The Bororó who is called upon to become a bari (medicine man) receives a mysterious order to deliver himself up in the bush, where the spirit will manifest itself to him in the form of a monkey or a water hog and will demand his submission. As a sign of acquiescence, he will give up his bow and arrows. His head will whirl; a thousand colors will dance before his eyes; he has become a bari." (32) [Cited in French.]

32. Métraux. Op. cit., I, 203.
Italics are ours.

#756 828 Apart from this domination to which the spirits subject the shaman, converting him into a creature at the service of their wishes, there is another factor, perhaps more important in its external form than the previous ones and one that makes us think more of the double life of the shaman: This is his frequent attacks,

[48 cont.]

682 murderer's family after the crime were extremely cruel, as was to be expected given the Guajiro social organization. Their homes were burned down, their sources of water supply demol- [567] ished, three men and four women were killed, and their children enslaved.

782 The interesting part of the subject we are now dealing with 751 lies in the sacrifice of animals. These apparently serve as 761 substitutes for the individuals whose sentence has been revealed in a dream. They take their place and are sacrificed in their stead. As a death has taken place, the evil spirit which had enslaved the future criminal in order to carry out its determination to harm him is now mollified by this act of propitiation. Moreover, as the animal (the black male goat in this case) shares the qualities of its owner by reason of such ownership, a part of the personality of the person sentenced to be punished in the dream is also sacrificed. The individual thus suffers two processes, death in part through the sacrifice of the animal and participation in the sacrifice by bathing in its blood.

● 171 Possible vestiges of this native belief still persist in 761 Colombian folklore in some parts of the departments of Antioquia, 825 Boyacá, Nariño, and Santander. There the people hold the be- 538 lief that when a domestic animal dies, especially if it is an animal that has been much loved by the people of the house, it is a sign that some member of the household had been about to die. The sentence of death which lay on that person, according to the explanation given in all cases, was transferred to the animal by a special concession from God, [49] thus avoiding a greater calamity to the family. In Nariño this belief, according to information from the Licentiate Chaves, appears in popular oral literature. There is in reality a story which tells of a recently married couple who felt or knew (we cannot say how) that they would die very shortly. To avoid this, the wife dedicated herself to breeding cuyes (curíes) [conejillo de Indias, a mammal of the order of rodents], which one by one died off; then she hastened to breed chickens, which also successively died; she then devoted herself to dogs, which also died. With the successive deaths of the animals, they were able to elude their own fate and lived happily together for a long time, free

971 [49 cont.]
538 from the menace of death that had weighed on them, and later
761 they were able to raise their domestic animals with greater
825 success than up to then.

000 Propitiation of the shaman's protector spirit. The sacrifice of animals as propitiation or thanksgiving offering to the spirit or spirits that have taken over the protection of the shaman is fully explained in the previous chapter, for which reason we abstain from making further reference to it.

782 Conclusions. We have the following facts regarding the
174 place of such sacrifices within Guajiro social organization: (a) Sacrifice of animals, of two kinds: one of a ritual funeral character and the other as a prevention of the fulfillment of dreams. (b) Human sacrifice, which may now be considered to have disappeared due to various circumstances which have already been described. (c) The first two exist at times in their original form, and at other times as mere survivals disguised in social rather than ritualistic forms, as happens for example in the sacrifice of animals during the secondary burial or the wake in the ceremony of the first burial. (d) But in any case the three show a distinct magic nature. (e) With respect to the sacrifice of animals we may suppose that in ancient times the animal sacrificed must have been a wild one from the forest obtained by hunting, as the Guajiro Indians, the same as all Colombian Indians and American Indians in general, were completely without, or almost without, any domestic animals, which were acquired only after the Conquest when the colonizing Spaniards imported them from the [Iberian] Peninsula to set up their ranches; (f) Based on this same socio-economic fact, we may presuppose quite an appreciable change in the content and form of certain types of ceremony, because the passing from one economy to another, particularly when it is so radical as [50] that of the
782 Guajiro, who changed his character of nomad hunter to that of herdsman and stock grazer, implies a very appreciable transformation in the general social organization. (g) In the sacrifice of children, and in that of animals in order to ward off the evils foreseen in dreams, we have to admit the contaminating effect of spilled blood — a very important taboo in La Guajira — which increases the malevolent effect of the magic

753 751 [73] In the Guajiro mentality sickness, as we were able to see in the corresponding sections ("Medicine and Sickness" and "Life Cycle of the Shaman"), is not something provoked by natural causes but is the consequence of the malevolent action of some special being, above all, of a spirit. So a series of beliefs, magic preventatives, have been established in order to avoid or ward off the hostile action of these spirits on the individual, as we were able to note in the chapter "Sickness and Medicine." We also saw in the matter relating to magic and sickness how certain animals, plants, and objects could be agents by contamination or participation in the cause and development of [775] sickness. But it is particularly the spirit of the dead, offended and malevolent, that causes major disasters among the Guajiro, as is shown by their beliefs and their own preventative systems.

192 753 775 [747] [196] We can get aid from linguistics to clarify this concept. The word that the Guajiro uses for illness in general is wanurú, and the same word is the one that is used for the spirit of the dead – the devil, according to all writers and even to the natives themselves, due to the effects of religious acculturation provoked by the Capuchin fathers. Still further, if we break down the word we find that it is formed of three special particles, wa, num ru, which separately correspond to three different concepts: Wa is derived from the first person plural of the personal pronoun wayú, which means "we"; nu, or simply n, is nothing more than the general contraction of the third person singular of the personal pronoun niá, "he," and rú is a relative particle derived from surú or hurú (s or h according to which dialectal zone the word is taken from), which signifies "inside," "inside of," or "within." In view of the idiomatic composition of the Guajiro dialect, we can with all safety translate the word wanurú as follows: "he, inside of us." The linguistic construction therefore corresponds to a social reality: sickness, wanurú, is nothing more than that: the spirit of the dead that has entered an individual in order to cause him a particular illness for some disrespect or other that he has shown toward the spirit, or simply just because it is a malignant and vindictive spirit.

● 171 753 775 *756 The relation sickness – death – spirit, which will later be the object of a special study on our part, can be proved through linguistics in many of the aboriginal Colombian and even American

[73 cont.]

171 753 755 *756 groups, as far as we have been able to discover personally or by bibliographical inquiry. To give no more than a small sample of this, let us see [74] two quotations which corroborate our previous statement, but for clarity before doing this we have to recall a little about the place of the magician, sorcerer, medicine man, or shaman in aboriginal communities as an intermediary between two worlds, or as the sole means of communication with the spirits through which he successfully obtains his magic effects. This clarification is necessary because on many occasions the word used for sickness or death might be confused with the word used for shaman, or medicine man, for this very condition.

171 *756 For example, Mother Laura, referring to the Katío [Catio] Indians (51) says: "Among the many peculiarities which study

> 51. The Katío Indians belong linguistically and culturally to the Chokó group of the Karib [Carib] linguistic family (Rivet, op. cit.). They lived and still live in a great part of the northeast of Antioquia department in the republic of Colombia.

of the customs, usages, and beliefs of the Catío tribe reveals, the most noticeable is jaibanism.

"The etymology of the word jaibaná is as follows: jai = sickness, pana = gathering (derived from capaná, flock or herd). Consequently, this word may be translated: a collection or gathering of sicknesses. The general acceptance is "doctor." (52)

> 52. Montoya, Laura (Rev. Mother). Nociones sobre usos y costumbres de los Catíos en el departamento de Antioquia [Notes on Usages and Customs of the Catío Indians in the Department of Antioquia], p. 148.

This word jaibaná to which Mother Laura refers corresponds to what ethnographically we might denominate medicine man as

[74 cont.]

171 he is the witch and curer of the tribe, as we learn from the
*756 Mother Superior's writings, a wizard whose supernatural powers place him at the peak of the social pyramid. This jaibaná is none other than an individual who has by himself and for himself absorbed the power of the spirits — of the dead — and who by this is able to carry out the same functions as they are capable of, that is, he can do evil or good as the fancy takes him. For this reason "when some illness suddenly attacks the Indians they say they are bewitched, and they point to the person from whom they have received the injury. They dream persistently of a certain jaibaná and that he observes them with a grim, severe look or that he lies in ambush for them armed with spears or guns, and from this they assume that the doctor of whom they dream is he who has bewitched them." (53) In this case it is

53. Ibid., p. 151.

therefore the jaibaná, ("collection of sicknesses," according to the etymology) who, taking advantage of his power both to absorb and dominate the spirits, goes about among the Indians causing them harm and also [75] curing them when sick people go to him in search of help. Again we meet with this duality which we have already pointed out regarding the spirits of the dead (friends — enemies) and which we showed in the previous chapter, "Sickness and Medicine," in regard to spirits in general, as well as animals.

171 Among the Chibcha Colombian Indians of the savannas of
776 Cundinamarca, we also find a linguistic and conceptual correspondence between devil and death. In our opinion, among
797 primitives there does not exist, or did not exist among the
775 American aborigines before the Conquest, the concept of devil as such, but only of a spirit of evil which, although it may possess some similarity to the devil of our Catholic religion differs in many aspects from it. From all that we have been able to observe, the idea of the devil among the American primitives, introduced no doubt after the Conquest by Catholic missionaries, corresponds more to an entity, spiritual it is true and capable of

[75 cont.]

171 doing good or evil, but always a physical evil, not a spiritual
776 one as done by the devil as conceived in the Catholic religion.
777 Also, according to our observations, this same spirit of the primi-
775 tives is none other than the spirit of the dead, of their ancestors, inhabitants of the "other world," an unreal world that is not directly tangible, or at least not completely so, to the senses but real in the conception, in the faith and beliefs of the primitives. This last characteristic of the American aborigines' demonic spirits, confused with the dead, separates them formally and conceptually from the idea of the devil as understood in Catholicism.

171 Returning to the Chibcha tribe of the savannas, we find
775 that one of the words that their dialect uses to describe a dead
776 person is guajaia (we retain the author's spelling), and the word for "devil" is guaioque. We can attempt to split up the second word in the following way: guaia, que. This last particle that we have split off has the sense of "strong," "vigorous." Thus, by splitting up guaioque — translated as "devil" by the different writers on the Chibcha language of Cundinamarca — would really have the meaning of "powerful dead one." (54) We could

54. The linguistic notes have been taken from two works: El Idioma Chibcha o aborigen de Cundinamarca [The Chibcha or Aboriginal Language of Cundinamarca] by J. Acosta Ortegoñ and Gramática, Vocabulario, Catecismo i Confesionario de la lengua Chibcha [Grammar, Vocabulary, Catechism, and Confessional of the Chibcha Language] by Ezequiel Uricoechea.

include many other quotations to corroborate our statement, but, as we have mentioned, we reserve [76] these for a separate work. We only wish to expound our general theory for the better understanding of this study. It is sufficient then for us once again to affirm that death, sickness, spirit (devil), and even medicine man are all concepts that belong to one and the same ideological circle, totally imbued with the spiritualistic content of magic related to the soul of the dead.

[80 cont.]
775 787 the following: "Because there are going to be more deaths in the house."

In this story we can appreciate three very clear facts in relation to the dead: 1) that these can return to the bodily form they had when living ; 2) that their presence is an omen of coming misfortune as it announces the death of some member of the family, especially of the closest relatives; 3) that, as we have already noted, the spirit is incapable of communicating with the living by word of mouth.

158 775 787 The blind belief that the Guajiro have in the apparition of the dead in bodily form is due, according to the investigations that we were able to make in part, to a psychological phenomenon: It is clearly seen in La Guajira, and the natives so recognize it, that people do not want to look at a dead person's face. This is owing to the fact that this face will be engraved very deeply on their memory, to the point that when the individual who has looked at it is traveling by road at night, or when it is getting dark, or when he is alone at night in his dwelling and worried, on opening his eyes he will clearly see the dead man in the form he had when alive. We therefore believe that what happens in this case is that the individual is obsessed with and has firmly strongly impressed on his mind the decomposing face of the dead person that, as we have said, stays strongly impressed on his memory through this same act. This observation of ours does not apply exclusively to Guajiro [171] Indians or to other primitives. It is also very common among the town people of practically all the regions of Colombia which we have visited. The psychic phenomenon of obsession and then the almost perfect reconstruction of the image engraved on the memory is a common occurrence among them. But if [81] we add to this the Guajiro's collection of beliefs related to the dead and the fear of the apparition of spirits, which are always harbingers of misfortune (death, sickness, misfortune in general), we can understand how a person so obsessed reconstructs in his nervous state the previously impressed image and, in his imagination, gives it a body. The effects of fear are then translated into a seemingly real image of the dead person, and the

[81 cont.]

158 individual is not capable of distinguishing between the merely
775 fictitious, the imaginary and the real. To him, the image so
787 faithfully rebuilt in his imagination is as real as the living image of the deceased. The explanation of the phenomenon, then, according to his mentality, is that the dead man has appeared before him for some reason or other.

775 This fact is complicated in addition by the belief that every dead person "retraces his steps," that is, he treads again all the paths he traveled during his life; he returns to places where he had been at different times; this is why he is "felt" very often. Many times the individual feels the presence of the dead, even if he does not see it. This Guajiro belief is
[171 also found to be very prevalent in all Colombian folklore. The
538] phenomenon that the Colombian people call "retracing his steps" corresponds exactly to the Guajiro version which we have just transcribed. Of course, according to popular legends, the dead "retrace their steps" when they are dying or a few
[787] moments or even days before their death. To hear strange noises without apparent logical explanation, to see shadows, etc., are for the people evident signs that one of their relatives or friends, or even some person who in the past has lived in these parts, is dying or will die from one moment to the next. For the same reason they avoid walking alone along certain places when they know that someone who has lived there is close to death's door.

Degrees of danger in spirits. The Guajiro murderer suffers
682 a double punishment; first, the claim for compensation payment
775 for blood presented by the dead man's relatives, which involves his own death if he does not pay the sum agreed on; and second, the constant presence of the dead man's spirit, which never leaves him. For this reason, the murderer cannot enter a home where there are small children because the spirit of the dead man follows him, will climb over them, squeeze them, and make them
[753] cry. If the children are sick, the murderer's presence is even more dangerous because the spirit will rapidly cause their death. If they are well they usually become ill. [82]

The death of a fellow being becomes a tremendous ob-
[753] session with the Guajiro; the murderer is convinced that the dead man's spirit follows him everywhere. When he is ill he has

[84 cont.]

682 family groups — that of the murderer and that of the victim —
775 is it considered necessary for the murderer to flee to distant parts to avoid the vengeance of his enemies falling on him. We have here, then, a repetition, different in form but essentially the same, of a disguise to avoid the presence of the spirits, [171] which the Witoto practice either in the father, the mother, or the child, with the object of protecting the child from the malevolent action of the spirits (Cf. "Sickness and Medicine").

787 Presence of the dead in dreams. The dead person can also
769 reappear through the medium of dreams. He is then as real, as alive, to the Indian as in his apparition during the day or night in a corporeal or other form, such as we have shown throughout this chapter. For this reason, when an Indian dreams of one of his dead relatives on any occasion, he believes that this relative is in need of something in his other world and requires [85] special help from his relatives. He therefore assembles the dead man's closest relatives, and they all go as soon as possible to the grave of the person who appeared in the dream and take a little food with them. After some time passed in lamentation over the tomb, they unwrap the meat expressly taken there for the occasion and seat themselves on the grave, prepared to eat, saying as they begin eating, "Come then, let us all eat together." To avoid the appearance of spirits through dreams, it is a general custom to visit the graves of the dead at times of full moon [luna clara], at night, and on the anniversary of the person's death.

The explanation of the spirit's appearance in a dream can be found very clearly expressed in the words we quote from Dr. Born and according to which "... from experiences in the world of dreams he derived the belief in the soul as a clear explanation of the consciousness of "ego," which is opposed to the destiny of death." According to this, in the dream communication is established between two spirits, between two souls, as Dr. Born says: that of the dead, already definitively free of its human wrapping; and that of the living, momentarily free of its body by the effects of the dream.

766 Burial and children. When the first-born of a Guajiro marriage dies before other children are born, they place it in an urn

[87 cont.]

858 greater protection than the adult as, owing to his limited defensive capacity, illnesses can readily take possession of his body. We made reference in that section to the malevolent action of certain animals as well as the influence of the dead, the contamination exercised by their spirits on conception and on small children. And now we return to refer especially to this last aspect. We also saw how the harmful effects of animals centered especially on unborn infants due to carelessness on the part of pregnant mothers or of the husbands, and this is repeated equally with regard to funerals.

[764] When the grave destined for a dead person is opened, small children who go to the funeral, relatives of the deceased, must pass in file over it with the object that death will be delayed and will not overcome them while very young.

843 When speaking of sacrifice (cf. Chapter III) as well as
753 when speaking of medicine among the Guajiro Indians in its
[171] magic aspect, we quoted the general belief in La Guajira, which is known also as an aspect of folklore in various parts of Colombia, among them Santander and Nariño, that if during pregnancy, the father or the mother of the child to be born has been present at the exhumation of any human remains, the child will be born sickly, will suffer from diarrhea, night sweating, paleness, and loss of weight. The characteristic of something touched by death which the corpse has makes it contagious and, so to speak, contaminates the mother of the infant, who because of his weakness is incapable of resisting its influence. If in this case one considers the folklore aspect, the explanation which is given is that the cold of death has affected the child through the person of its mother or its father in the presence of the corpse. The explanation in the case of Guajiro appears to
755 us to be somewhat more complicated, as we had occasion to show above, although the curing processes tend in reality to extract the cold of death from the body of the child after it is born. The method of curing considered infallible by them is to bury the child in the still warm carcass of an animal sacrificed [88] during a wake, and only when there is no such possibility do they make use of the substitute, the bone, or of burying

[99 cont.]

751 the charm. He has two aims in view, to render himself immune
726 from harm from his enemies' weapons, and to acquire courage
579 and coolness in the coming fight. This type of charm is called ranía in Guajiro.

754 The evil eye. This is one of the beliefs which seems to us to have been acquired by the Guajiro Indians through acculturation, [779] as we have not found it in any purely native group but, on the contrary, have found it very widely spread in all parts of Colombia, especially among the mestizos. We have personally encountered it in the departments of Cauca, Valle del Cauca, [171] Tolima, Antioquia, Santander, and Magdalena. Without being exclusive to Negro or Negroid groups, it is among them that this belief is found with the greatest intensity and frequency.

175 The presence of Negroes in La Guajira is not due only to
563 racial mixing with the groups of mulattos of the coast but was initiated in the centuries of the Colony as can be seen from these notes taken from Father Julián: "Two evident and palpable reasons came to me: practical reasons which because of my zeal for the welfare of the Guajiro Nation and for the Monarchy I now express. The first is their provision and use of [100] firearms through their continual trade with foreigners; secondly, these same foreigners have brought in Negroes and Negresses, and these [567] have mixed with the Indian men and women who have bought and kept them as slaves. The result is that not only is the number of people in La Guajira increased but so also is the number of terrible races of Mestizos, Mulattos, Zambos, etc., who united with the Guajiro will make this nation even more formidable and everyday more difficult to conquer." (59)

59. Julián, Antonio. La Perla de la América [The Pearl of America], 2nd, XIV, 195.

754 Referring to this popular Santander belief, Juan de Dios Arias affirms: "In our territory, for example, there is a very general belief that certain persons have the evil eye, and if they should look fixedly and with evil intention at a child, in the course of a few days the latter will be covered with pimples and sore places which are difficult to cure. This evil influence is

[100 cont.]
754 also effective on birds, which die in a short time when they have
the evil eye put on them. To protect the children they are
[751] made to wear rings or bracelets made of jet beads, buzzard [chulo]
bones, guache [a certain serpent] teeth, or male and female
coral stones. They also avert the evil eye by singing three hymns
over the sufferer.

"We also find this superstition in Spain. The physician
● 171 Rodríguez López, referring to Galician superstitions, writes:
754 'Here, where the belief in the evil eye is so strongly held, it
751 is exceptional for a mother not to hang round her child's neck
certain relics, herbs, horns, or other objects of all shapes and
sizes, or at other times to sew them on to their children's clothes,
or tie them to their wrists to protect them from the contagious
effects of the evil eye.'" (60)

60. Arias, Juan de Dios. Supersticiones Populares [Popular Superstitions], pp. 265-266.

Besides this, in the study made by the Licentiate Panesso Robledo on Antiochian folklore we find the following:

"Not only country people but also city dwellers wear opals, nearly all imitation, to protect themselves from evil actions, and on their children's wrists they tie black beads, called jet but rarely genuine, to keep them safe from the evil eye, a universal superstition whose effects if they really occur are to be imputed to the phenomena of auto-suggestion or hypnotism." (61)

61. Panesso R., Antonio. Del Folklore Antioqueño [Antioquian Folklore], p. 25.

751 Leaving Colombian folklore and limiting ourselves to that
754 of La Guajira, we find there that jet is the best charm to protect
823 one from the evil eye, [101] which especially affects children.
865 This evil effect is not obtained if the person on whom it is
practiced carries jet on his person, since it has the property of
counteracting the evil. According to the belief, when the evil
eye has been cast upon a person carrying a piece of jet, this

751 [102]
825 head the party, and these insist that the rest of the caravan who
[784] are riding on burros or are on foot follow them closely.

If the wamurú fears the neighing of horses, it is also afraid in the presence of its skull. The important element in this belief is that its appearance must date from the Post-conquest period, since the natives did not have horses before that event. It is thus a belief acquired through acculturation. Our hypothesis is
•171 that it was introduced by the Negroes, as similar beliefs are
175 found in the mining regions of Antioquia, as we can show by
751 quoting Tomas Carrasquilla in his work La Marquesa de Yolombó
825 [The Marchioness of Yolombó], the plot of which is unfolded in colonial times in these regions. He speaks of the popular belief in demonic monsters, especially by the Negro slaves who worked the mines, and refers particularly to a special being whom the simple people named the pate-tarro [pata de tarro, "can foot"], "a giant who had only one foot of flesh and bone. If it were not that this great scoundrel was scared to death by skulls of cows, there would not have remained alive a single pawpaw tree in these mountainous cultivated lands."

The similarity is obvious: A cow's skull keeps away evil spirits and averts their wickedness. The difference lies in something of minor importance — one is the skull of a cow, the other that of a horse. The beings against whom they direct their evil are different by reason of mere accommodation to the cultural atmosphere in which the belief is implanted.

777 Charms for becoming rich. This charm is acquired, as are all others, by purchase from a Guajiro woman experienced in the matter. Almost always the owner of such a charm is a man who by means of its power has acquired considerable wealth, because his charm will not allow him to do any bad business; it counsels him on what operations he must accomplish, it points out to him the profits that he could obtain from certain financial operations, and, above all, it guarantees him success in whatever business he undertakes.

The charm is kept inside a small wool bag, and with it he keeps a gold bead and at times a gold necklace. The part of the charm that we might call nonmaterial is produced by the various

7:Bolinder T-8 (1920, 1938) 1957
SC13 Guajiro SC13

123 352 534

ceived. They brought out stools carved with animals' heads and tails for us to sit on, and then four young men hastened to entertain us with music. I had happened to ask about musical instruments and it appeared that we had come to a musical family. They all played the flute, which there was usually small, of reed or wood, and ornamented with carved figures. There was also a larger flute which had a mouthpiece and reed, like a child's trumpet, and a calabash at the other end. This instrument buzzed and droned like a bumble-bee. It was extraordinary. It did not seem a South American instrument at all. In fact, it was quite simply an offshoot of the eastern snake-charmer's flute, which I had seen in Morocco. How had it got to America? Perhaps through the [171] Moors. The early Spanish discoverers had Moorish slaves and servants with them, and, as we shall see, this flute was not the only indication of Moorish influence.

Guajira is often called the Arabia of South America, because it too is an arid peninsula with a population largely consisting of nomad herdsmen. In the distance a Guajiro caravan looks thoroughly eastern, and who knows from whom the Guajiros' forefathers acquired their knowledge of how to ride and to rear cattle?

123 533

Not wishing to spoil the concert, I said nothing of all this. I myself am quite unmusical, but my wife gave the performers full marks. The pieces had names that suited the setting: 'The Little Goat seeks its Mother', 'The Horses are driven Home', 'By the rippling Water'. The four also sang. To European ears their singing was considerably less attractive than the music, but the words were often poetical and lovely. 'The little goat laments and says: the water that I drink is salt and salt are the plants I have to eat. And just as it begins to drizzle, the little goat's salt tears fall along with the other drops upon the salt ground.' In that perhaps was a little too much salt, but it was typically Guajiran. Even a goat can get too much of what others seek so avidly elsewhere.

123 534

They showed us other musical instruments: a drum that was played for dancing and a whistle made of calabash, intended for signalling. One of the four also produced a

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

those we had left, but just as simple. Inside were hammocks slung this way and that. Along the walls were carrying-nets filled with things, and earthenware vessels lay scattered about the floor of hard-trodden sand. Some of these vessels were grey, others reddish-brown, some had necks and handles. One was an obvious imitation of a Dutch liqueur jar. It was not far to Puerto Estrella, to which schooners from the Dutch islands came.

Most of the earthenware vessels had red decoration. Some, with wavering lines, were obviously the work of the oldest of the women, who was frail and almost blind; but there was no fault in the shape of the vessel. The woven cloths were hung up in a special shelter. The warp hung vertical and ran like an endless belt over an upper and a lower pole. Several related tribes, members of the Aruak family, use the same method. When the cloth is finished, it forms a ring, and is then cut up.

They were working on a man's belt or sash. The everyday belt was only a couple of inches wide, but sashes intended for more solemn occasions were some eighteen inches broad and very colourful. They used red, yellow, black and white yarn and the pattern was most interesting. Ceremonial cloaks are also woven for the men, just as colourful as the sashes, but, to my sorrow, I was never able to acquire a really fine specimen. They were simply too expensive. The rich chiefs collected them, but custom decreed that they must be wrapped in all their cloaks when they died, which meant that none were inherited. The men's everyday cloaks I have already described; they pulled them on and then twisted them so that their chest was bared. The women's dress was considerably more Spartan: it was a wide tunic, made like a sack with holes for the head and arms, and dyed black with divi-divi or brown with stuff from some other plant. Their loin-cloth only became visible when they were working in the shade or indoors and removed their tunics. It too was black or undyed. They themselves thought that there was no call to use a nice patterned cloth for underclothes. Little girls often had patterned loin-cloths, but then they did not wear tunics

7:Bolinder T-5 (1920, 1955) 1957
SC13 Goajiro SC13

several days afterwards, but have to be fed. They also have to keep to a diet for a while, a precaution that, like the cloaks they are wrapped in while digging up the bones, is to protect them against spirits.

In the old days the house in which a person died was abandoned. Nowadays that is only done if the person has been murdered.

I have come across this after-funeral among several Indian tribes farther south, in particular the Motilon in the Andes, neighbours of the Guajiro, and the Indians of the Llanos plains around the Orinoco. It seems a peculiar custom to us, but it is a sort of memorial ceremony, a feast of remembrance devoted to the dead person, who is thus not forgotten so quickly by the Indians, as is often the case with us.

The animals killed at a man's funeral are to accompany him into the hereafter and enable him to maintain his position there. His immediate relatives must not eat of this meat, which is all given to the guests, who cook it and feast on it.

Different in character is the sacrifice of some creature, a black sheep or a brown cow, which the piache recommends when he has dreamed that someone is in danger of being murdered. Here the animal is being killed in place of the threatened man, the goat or cow acting as substitute so that the human can escape his fate. Presumably, what used to happen was that the person threatened had to go out and kill some wild animal, a deer for example. The custom of slaughtering cattle at a funeral originates from the change in the Indians' way of life that resulted from their making cattle-rearing their main occupation. Earlier the dead person was given other grave-goods to enable him to manage in the life hereafter, including ornaments and that sort of thing. In the pre-Columbian era quantities of polished stone beads and tuma were placed in the graves. Then, when fortunes began to be reckoned in cattle and horses, it was obvious that the dead person must have cattle to accompany him. To the Guajiro, as to the general run of Indians, there is no such thing as natural death. Were it not for the dangerous world of the spirits and evil enchanters people

THE GOAJIRO

By JOHN M. ARMSTRONG AND ALFRED MÉTRAUX

THE REGION

The Goajira Peninsula, projecting as part of Colombia northward into the Caribbean Sea, contains an area of about 5,000 square miles, bordered on the east by the Gulf of Venezuela. The broad level plain known as Lower Goajira occupies the base of the peninsula, while the northern extremity is known as Upper Goajira and is characterized by three distinct ranges of hills. These hills have a maximum height of 2,600 feet (about 780 m.) and are separated from each other by two broad plains which run from sea to sea. The country is dry and infertile, the vegetation consisting of divi-divi, cactus, pricklypear, and other xerophitic plants. Even these are absent where bare rock and stone slides preclude vegetation. Rivers are almost nonexistent, the country being cut in all directions by shallow, dry, sandy water courses which drain off rain as it falls. In the south and west, on the treeless prairies or savannas, the land is more hospitable. Here the Indians do most of their stock raising.

LOCATION AND HISTORY

The pastoral *Goajiro* who inhabit this peninsula (map 6) differ profoundly from the agricultural forest-dwelling *Motilones* and *Arhuaco* to the south. Juan de Castellanos, in his "Elegías de los Varones Ilustres" (1874), is the first to allude to these Indians, though he calls them *Cosina*. He states that in his time, about 1550, cattle were already abundant in the area. It seems that the adoption of pastoral life by the *Goajiro* took place soon after the Spanish settlement of that part of the continent. The name *Goajiro* was, however, already known in the 16th century and was applied first by Pedro Simón (1882–92). The first reliable ethnographic information about the *Goajiro* goes back to José Nicolás de la Rosa (Nicholás, 1901) and Antonio Julián, who both visited these Indians in the 18th century. Jahn (1927, pp. 119–136) has gathered the few data concerning the *Goajiro* which he found in the early literature. A short summary of the first description of these Indians is given by Hernández de Alba (1936, pp. 8–12).

/537 cont./

614 212 231 422 knows precisely which animals belong to him and which property belongs to other clan-members.

In a way also customary among us (for example, the burning on of the steed-brand for foals), the clan-symbol in Guajira is pressed into the skin of the domestic animal with a branding iron, usually on the rear leg, sometimes on the lower neck. The branding iron is a rod as thick as a [413] finger and about a meter long, on whose lower end the brand, made in iron, is fixed. This is highly heated and briefly set on the skin of the animal with moderate pressure (9).

● 171 231 422

9. Everyone knows that many livestock-raising primitive peoples use the method described here for "branding" their domestic animals, and, to be sure, do it primarily with the intention of indicating the individual possessor or a group consisting of several men as the owner. M. Merker (p. 163) reports this for the Masai. H. Field collected more than a thousand such markings (Figs. 24-43) among the Bedouin and related tribes in the Near East. It might seem surprising that individual ones among them are very similar to the brands of the Guajiro. This correspondence, however, can easily be traced back to the mentality of the natives and their undeveloped technical skill, as well as to the brittle wrought-iron itself. The "branding iron" probably goes back to an earlier period of mankind; from its place of invention, it went on its way

/337 cont./

around the world simultaneously with the domestic animals themselves.

The branding described was probably learned by the Indians from the Spaniards themselves, simultaneously with the adoption of the first European domestic animals, and has been retained since then. It is all the more surprising that the branding iron (hierro) appears in an old myth which for its part clearly states where the customary individual clan-signs came from. The following version (according to V. Gutiérrez, p. 168) is common in the northern part of the peninsula:

Not far from Nazareth (10) a hill rises behind Itojoro.

10. This post lies only several kilometers south of Puerto Estrella and is actually a small Catholic mission station. Cf. Stutzer, pp. 121 ff., and Barranquilla, pp. 151 ff.

Here, under an oil tree, Mareiwa (11) came into the world.

11. That is the spelling of this mythological name that I felt to be correct, as did V. Gutiérrez (p. 168). Chaves (1946, p. 307) explains in the myth concerning "Las Serranías de la Guajira," among other things: "Mareigua [is] one of the principal deities of the Guajiro people, who with his supernatural power converts persons into hills, separates the

C 534 171 /193 cont./

Finally, it remains to be discovered whether a people neighboring the Busintana is familiar with the musical bow. I have already said that this was not the case among the rest of the Arhuaco.

G 534 Among the Goajiro Indians, along with the "trompa," a musical bow with horsehair string is used. One end of the bow is put in the mouth, and a narrow, uneven stick is drawn over G [177] the string. The strange material of the string already /194/ points to late influence; there are various African traits in the G Goajiro culture, as I shall try to show in a future monograph. [852] [171] Moreover, the musical bow here is small, poorly made, and is used mostly by boys. Among the Motilon Indians on the Maraca, too, boys play it (see below /untranslated/). Here one must G 534 177 likewise assume that the Indians learned how to use it only in post-Columbian times, probably from the mulattoes living in the flat country.

C 411 184 [1114] [553] [101] As far as the Chimila are concerned, De Brettes says that he saw hanging at the entrance of a hut a small bow 30 centimeters long, with accompanying arrows. He does not know what this is used for (192). I myself, during my brief visit among these

192 /from p. 257 of the foreign text/. De Brettes, p. 462.

Indians, did not see such a bow, but they told me that in connection with the naming of boys they use a bow decorated with C [553] feathers. Among the Ijca, the "sponsor" presents the little child with a tiny bow of palm wood. Naturally, this is no more intended as a musical instrument than the Chimila bow. Since the C 796 441 534 174 bow was already used in former times at religious ceremonies, which is not uncommon in South America, one can at least imagine that a musical bow, which even in size comes close to the symbolic bow, might easily find some use at these. The ceremonial must be observed, one must not forget anything, but an addition is easily achieved. The argument of Lumholtz is therefore not conclusive, as I have noted earlier. An instrument named marimba

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